



The Daring Heart of David Livingstone: Exile, African Slavery, and the Publicity Stunt That Saved Millions

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The captivating, untold story of the great explorer, David Livingstone: his abiding faith and his heroic efforts to end the African slave trade

Saint? Missionary? Scientist? Explorer?

The titles given to David Livingstone since his death are varied enough to seem dubious—and with good reason. In view of the confessions in his own journals, *saint* is out of the question. Even *missionary* is tenuous, considering he made only one convert. And despite his fame as a scientist and explorer, Livingstone left his most indelible mark on Africa in an arena few have previously examined: slavery.

His impact on abolishing what he called “this awful slave-trade” has been shockingly overlooked as the centerpiece of his African mission.

Until now.

The Daring Heart of David Livingstone tells his story from the beginning of his time in Africa to the publicity stunt that saved millions after his death.

The Daring Heart of David Livingstone: Exile, African Slavery, and the Publicity Stunt That Saved Millions Details

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Natalie Vellacott says

I had been curious about Livingstone for a while being aware of the general controversy surrounding his status as a missionary or otherwise.

This biographical journalistic account begins after the famous explorer's first return from Africa to public applause and virtual celebrity status in Britain. He sets off again, this time with government funding having sacked his missionary organisation. It seems this was more of a strategic decision than anything else because the Christian organisation was trying to tie his hands in different ways and Livingstone was a man of fierce independence. He refers often to his Christian faith in his journals but saw himself more as someone preparing and mapping the way for future missions than as an actual evangelist. He was unable/unwilling to share his faith effectively for most of his life due to the circumstances he found himself in, although there were several converts after his death.

Livingstone saw himself as a failure after repeated mission disasters and it was only really after his death that the extent of his work became known and was used in the ways that he had dreamed it would be. He continually highlighted the plight of those who were being trafficked as slaves throughout East Africa. He witnessed the barbarity and the lack of value of a human life. Stamping out this evil became his over-riding passion to the exclusion of all else at times. He frequently made impulsive decisions placing himself and others in danger and wasn't easy to work with, although later in his life this apparently changed.

It was sad to read about the neglect of his wife and children and the consequences for some of them. It seems that some of these great men make a choice and place their ministry/service above their family which is not as God intended it.

There is just one swear word in this book but frequent violence although it wasn't sensationalised, some was graphic. There is no sexual content.

As a general biography I would give this five stars. It is well written/ well-researched and compelling. In places it reads like a novel of fiction with extraordinary escapades and the like. However, I'm docking a star because there wasn't much spiritual content. I can see the dilemma that the missionary organisation faced regarding Livingstone. He was primarily an explorer who happened to be a Christian. It may have been better to accept this as there is a need for Christians in every field of work, rather than try to make him into something he wasn't.

Recommended reading about this controversial character.

Andy Bettencourt says

Solid book!

Solid book on a very interesting explorer/missionary who had many stories to tell. Livingstone also appears to be a difficult man to fully define.

James Pate says

Jay Milbrandt. *The Daring Heart of David Livingstone: Exile, African Slavery, and the Publicity Stunt that Saved Millions*. Nashville: Nelson Books (An Imprint of Thomas Nelson), 2014.

David Livingstone was a nineteenth century English explorer and missionary. *The Daring Heart of David Livingstone* is about his stand against slavery and the slave trade, as well as his desire to find the source of the Nile. (And, according to Milbrandt, the question of what the Nile's source is remains unresolved.)

The book was excellent whenever it discussed Livingstone's personal background, his personality, his family, his faith, and his attempts to navigate his opposition to slavery within sensitive political waters. Livingstone sought economic alternatives to slavery, such as establishing a colony in Africa from which England would receive cotton, allowing England to get cotton from another source besides the slave labor of the American South. Livingstone also tried to dissuade Africans from participating in the slave trade, while learning of their reasons for doing so, and he contended against "slavers" who captured people as slaves.

The book is quite detailed about Livingstone's nautical adventures, some of which I found interesting, and some of which I did not. Moreover, Milbrandt seemed to presume some background knowledge of Livingstone on the part of the reader. In my opinion, Milbrandt would have done well to state briefly in the preface what exactly Livingstone did in opposing slavery, so that readers would not get lost in the details later in the book. Milbrandt also should have included brief biographical information about Livingstone at the beginning of the book, to inform readers uninformed about Livingstone about who Livingstone was, and to allow readers to get to know Livingstone better.

Milbrandt includes discussion questions in the back of the book. Some of them relate to the application of Christianity. Some of them may require more historical knowledge in order for some readers to answer them (i.e., a question about whether an alternative approach to banning maritime slave shipping should have been taken in trying to end the slave trade, since the ban "arguably made the slave trade more dangerous and violent along the Kisiju Road..."). My favorite question was, "Was Livingstone a bad leader, or a good leader with bad people skills?"

People with an interest in and knowledge about Livingstone may find this book helpful. Those without as much background knowledge about him can still be edified by the book, since it is about a man who thought he had failed yet actually did not. But the latter category of readers may finish the book feeling unsatisfied, in areas.

Note: I received a complimentary review copy of this book through the BookLook Bloggers (<http://booklookbloggers.com/>) book review bloggers program. The program does not require for my review to be positive, and my review reflects my honest reaction to the book.

Vera Godley says

David Livingston is a man that in many ways failed. He failed as a missionary in that he only had one convert (and that is a dubious convert). He failed as an explorer (for truly his heart was into scientific exploration) in that he did not discover the mouth of the Nile. He failed to bring commerce to central Africa as a means to end the slave trade. Yet, for a seemingly multi-faceted failure, he is a much recognized and much revered individual. So exactly what did David Livingston accomplish?

The author Jay Milbrandt has thoroughly researched and presented the reader a rather in depth biography of Dr. Livingstone. While not excessively in depth nor length, the book is not an easy read. It is dry, detailed, and in some ways distracting in its thoroughness. I found I quickly developed a dislike for the man, Livingstone. He is brutishly rude. Stubborn. Opinionated. He could go for weeks without speaking to anyone on shipboard no matter what the person wished to speak about. And he was, in my opinion, an uncaring husband and father.

He was, however, moved by the plight of the people of Africa whom the slavers - Portuguese, Arab, and yes, African - inflicted on human life for the sake of money. Africans sold their own tribesmen since that was all they had to "trade." Portuguese and Arab slavers massacred hundreds and used the Africans as porters to move ivory from inland Africa to the coast. Then they sold the slaves on the market. Yes, Livingston was moved. His solution was to create a new means of commerce for the interior of Africa that would halt the need to continue selling Africans as a means of gain.

Adventurer. Missionary. Abolitionist. Scientist. In the end, just who and what was Dr. David Livingston? I would say he was a man driven by ideas and ideals that he failed to see to fruition. I felt rather disappointed in his adventures since I had the perception that he was a missionary. My image of a missionary was not fulfilled in Mr. Livingstone. True, he did much to bring to a halt the slave trade and that is a major plus in his favor.

DISCLOSURE: I received a complimentary copy from BookLook Blogging Program on behalf of the publisher and author in exchange for a review. Opinions expressed are solely my own. I received no compensation for this review.

Reet Champion says

From the time that he was thrown into the public's eye David Livingstone has been branded many things. To this day there are still those who wonder what his true motives whether. Different biographers have either viewed him as a heroic missionary or explorer bent on fame. Jay Milbrandt instead brings us a different take on this controversial figure. In his latest book the author covers the issue of African slavery and how Livingstone was very much a factor in its decline in the age of Victoria.

This can be a very hard book to get through. While it is not the sensational book that goes on and on about the brutalities that Africans suffered at the hands of slavers it doesn't shirk the truth either. With excerpts of Livingstone's journals scattered throughout readers will have a lot to ponder over. I loved the layout of the book and the different quotes of Livingstone. It was a fascinating journey into another time and place. For those wondering if this is a heavy and in-depth book I would say that it is quality and not quantity that matter in *The Daring Heart of David Livingstone*. Recommended read.

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received a hardcopy of “The Daring Heart of David Livingstone” provided by BookLookBloggers.com, in exchange for our honest review.

reetchampionbookreviews.wordpress.com

Nathan Albright says

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by BookLook/Thomas Nelson Publishers" in exchange for an honest review.]

I must admit that despite my own travel to Africa and my own interest in the problem of slavery and human trafficking, I did not know much about the life and career of David Livingstone except that his search for the source of the Nile and his getting lost in the heart of East Africa in the “Great Lakes” region led to a dramatic and well-publicized search leading to the legendary meeting of Stanley and Livingstone in the town of Ujiji with the words “Dr. Livingstone, I presume?” That is, of course, the moment of his career and life that has been most immortalized, a symbol of the budding rivalry between the United Kingdom and the United States over exploratory prowess and the moral high ground. There was a great deal more of interest to the life and death of David Livingstone, which has a great deal to tell us today.

This particular book is organized in a mostly chronological fashion. It begins in media res, at the height of Livingstone’s popularity after his initial solitary travels in South Africa crossing the Kalahari on foot and exploring areas that would later become part of the imperial conflicts of Germany and the United Kingdom, and then goes back to that initial travel and the effect it had on Livingstone’s life. The book then proceeds in a chronological fashion through Livingstone’s travels, his lack of political savvy, and his passion to end the East African slave trade before closing with an epilogue about the end of slavery in Zanzibar (the chief bazaar of the Muslim slave trade of the mid 1800’s) as well as having a lot of study questions that deal with the complexities of Livingstone’s life and behavior. This is a book that serves not only as a thoughtful biography but also as an incisive look at the politics of publicity stunts for humanitarian purposes, something that is as valid in our time with the problem of human trafficking as it was for Livingstone.

There was a lot to admire about the career and life of David Livingstone. He grew up in poverty in Scotland, including working in childhood industrial labor while learning Latin and studying for school on the side, and his driven nature led him to a high standard of education and a fierce faith that was combined with intense interest in science and progress. His turning his scarce economic capital into moral capital in drawing attention to the horrors of the Islamic East African slave trade was an immensely morally courageous act, even if he lacked political savvy in his comments and lacked honesty in his Zambezi expedition in the late 1850’s and early 1860’s. He was not a very good husband or father, and his intense and isolated ways tended to cause conflict with many of the people he worked with who expected more encouragement and sociability. He was, however, widely recognized for his gentleness and respect of others, particularly native Africans. In short, he was a man with flaws and a nature like our own, but a man whose behavior was largely for the benefit of many millions of people, even if he died believing (mistakenly) that his efforts had been in vain and that his life had been a waste. Those who read this book will see very clearly that this was not the case, and that even his mistakes of judgment were easy enough to understand given the limitations of the man and his time. May we all have biographers that are as sympathetic and honest as this one, and as interested in looking at the bigger picture of ethics and society.

Jocelyn says

This was a Christmas gift to David P. Although Livingstone has a much-told story, I didn't know much more than his name, and Stanley's famous line "Dr Livingstone, I presume?" This is a fascinating story of a flawed man, and his contribution to a very important fight. I recommend the story, but not the writing - an author with more ambition than vocabulary is very annoying! Two examples: church services "turned to chaos as people clamored over pews simply to shake his hand" , He had a small scrap of paper :"Turn over and see a drop of comfort...' Livingstone had scrolled across the front". However the research seems excellent and the story compelling.

Additional gripe: I don't like this fashion for including study questions! I think it is presumptuous, pompous and pre-emptive!

Joshua Ray says

In the past year or so I've been drawn to stories of great men of faith. This has led to me reading biographies of Hudson Taylor, Bonhoeffer, Jim Elliot, William Wilberforce, and others. It is inspiring to read of the paths these men walked in their faith, the challenges they faced in their lives, the sacrifices they made for their King, and the hope that drove them ever onwards. So when I had the opportunity to read a book about David Livingstone, I jumped at the chance. How would his testimony add to and compare with these other men?

In "The Daring Heart of David Livingstone" Jay Milbrandt focuses on the latter half of Dr. Livingstone's life from 1857 to 1874. Milbrandt's thesis is that "traditional biographers have largely overlooked [Livingstone's] advocacy for abolishing slavery. In so doing they have missed the real story...If David Livingstone pursued one purpose, it was freedom from the African slave trade" (xi).

How does Milbrandt support this thesis? First of all, he paints a very impartial and (as far as I know) accurate picture of Livingstone. There's no hero worship or whitewashing of sins here but there's also no demonizing or unfair blaming. Milbrandt shows Livingstone to be a complicated man with many failings but many strengths as well. Livingstone was a poor leader, a failure as a missionary, unsuccessful in many of his scientific expeditions, and a largely absentee husband/father. But he was also a visionary, relentlessly determined, and passionately convinced of God's providence in his life and the lives of others. This honest and fair treatment of Livingstone gives Milbrandt much credibility and reveals an imperfect man's struggle to serve his Lord in spite of his failings.

As far as Livingstone's purpose being the ending of the African slave trade, Milbrandt presents some convincing arguments and evidences, including Livingstone's own words.

"If the good Lord permits me to put a stop to the enormous evils of the inland slave-trade, I shall not grudge my hunger and toils. I shall bless his name with all my heart. The Nile sources are valuable to me only as a means of enabling me to open my mouth with power among men. It is this power I hope to apply to remedy an enormous evil [in the East African slave trade]." (210)

As a result of his fame, Livingstone had a platform on the world stage and he used this platform to successfully galvanize the world to move towards ending the East African inland slave trade. Whatever else you think about this man, you cannot ignore his part in advancing the cause of freedom.

There's much more to say about the book, but suffice to say that I enjoyed it and, while not perfect by any means, I give "The Daring Heart of David Livingstone" 4 stars out of 5.

Disclaimer: BookLook Bloggers has provided me with a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an impartial review.

ACS Book-finder says

I must quickly confess that prior to reading this book, I knew very little about the life of David Livingstone. What I had heard through Sunday School was all that I knew – David Livingstone was a great missionary to Africa, preaching and sharing God's Word and the plan of salvation. I had no idea he was considered a great explorer and scientist. I knew little to nothing of his desire and goal to abolish slave trading in and out of Africa and that the great expedition to discover the source of the mighty Nile River was a means to an end for Livingstone – the abolition of slavery. I am embarrassed at my ignorance about this great man, but I can definitely say that it is not as great now as before.

This book has been an eye-opener for me and a good teacher.

"The Daring Heart of David Livingstone" begins with Livingstone's return to London at the end of 1856 and culminates with his death May 1, 1873, and the signing of a treaty for complete abolition of slave trading in Africa in August 1874. The book takes us through an almost 20-year journey by Livingstone. Along the way, we experience Livingstone's success and failures. We see him as man with faults, but never wavering from his desired goal – a goal he did not see achieved during his lifetime.

In the author's note at the front of the book: "Livingstone would never know the success of his grand publicity stunt. A mere thirty-six days after passing away deep in the heart of Africa, legislation in Zanzibar would make slavery illegal in East Africa. He passed away believing he failed in almost everything in life. For abolition, he sacrificed his career, his reputation, his fortune, his wife, his children, and eventually, his own life."

"The Daring Heart of David Livingstone" is a good book and one I recommend. I will be reading more about David Livingstone. Thank you to the author Jay Milbrandt.

DISCLOSURE: A complimentary copy was provided by BookLook Blogging program on behalf of the publisher and author to facilitate this review. Opinions expressed are solely those of the reviewer. No compensation was received for this review.

Dustin Morrow says

This book takes you into the heart of Africa and into the heart of Livingston himself.

Jimmy Reagan says

What do you really know about David Livingstone? Would you love a volume that in giving wonderful

biographical narrative emphasized one of Livingstone's greatest, yet seldom-discussed accomplishments? How about if the volume was gripping to the point it you did not want to put down? You should, then, check out the new release *The Daring Heart of David Livingstone* by Jay Milbrandt and published by Thomas Nelson.

The subtitle "Exile, African Slavery, and the Publicity Stunt That Saved Millions" clues you in his angle. I must confess that at first I was a little skeptical about that angle. Livingstone was a missionary, not a political crusader, right?

Fortunately, the book was not obsessed with its angle, but only developed it naturally as it went along. What you had instead was the famous story marvelously condensed and thrilling as ever. All the big events were there woven seamlessly into the story of the man and the author's conclusions. Mr. Milbrandt can tell a story well.

The author showed Mr. Livingstone warts and all, yet you never lost your great respect for him. He had his struggles and he felt a failure on several occasions. Results were unpleasant actually at times too. Yet, Livingstone never failed to keep pressing on.

What the author demonstrated well was that Livingstone, though he died without knowing it, was one of the main reasons the slave trade in Africa stopped. He proved too that became ever more a goal for Livingstone. He was horrified at the tragic events he witnessed in the abuse, enslavement, and, even, slaughter of Africans.

The irony of so much of Livingstone's goals being accomplished without him knowing it, and his lonely, humble life in Africa as he became a worldwide celebrity, is a most compelling story. In my view, it is a story of God at work in our world as well.

My only complaint is the missionary work of Livingstone was rarely discussed and portrayed as a minor thing. For the man who died praying by his bed in Africa, the evidence easily proves he was a servant of the Lord.

This book is a home run, and short enough for those readers who shy away from biographies that are a little too thick. You will enjoy this book!

I received this book free from the publisher. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.

Brandon Cooper says

I just finished reading *The Daring Heart of Livingstone* from author Jay Milbrandt. The work focuses on David Livingstone's quest to end the East African slave trade, something about which I had no knowledge of whatsoever until a few days ago.

If you don't know anything about Dr. Livingstone, you might start here. A faithful man who readily acknowledged his own shortcomings, Livingstone was utterly and completely dedicated to wiping out the horror of the slave trade, which is described in great detail here. It's tough to get through, at times, because as you might imagine, it's quite horrific and disturbing. The doctor's doubts and ambitions, expressed through

his journals, in many ways mirror the feelings of the reader as he or she progresses through the book.

It's a short work, which won't please those looking for a comprehensive biography. But the intent here is to zero in on the causes (and consequences) of the subject's faith and cause. In that regard, this is a sharp and well told story of dedication.

Rick Dugan says

A captivating story of a complicated man during a complicated time. Though this is the story of David Livingstone, it's also the story of the eradication of East African slavery.

At times it was difficult for people to determine which drove Livingstone most: his commitment to Christ, commercial interests, or pride and fame. This story presents Livingstone in all his contradictions. He set out as a missionary, but only saw one convert during his life. He built a reputation as an explorer who would discover the source of the Nile. He never found it. He became incredibly wealthy through his books, speaking and sponsorships, but lost it all. He had children he hardly knew, and a wife who died an alcoholic. He promoted colonialism with the goal of eradicating slavery. One month after his death, the East African slave trade came to an end.

At times he represented the worst of colonialism, yet he was loved as a brother by many Africans. He could be petty, prideful, neglectful, and cruel, yet was motivated by a Savior he believed loved all people.

Livingstone was a flawed man with a flawed strategy, a colonialist with the heart of an African who was powerfully used by God to end a horrible injustice. This is a beautiful story of the messy intersection between the human and divine.

Mazzou B says

Missionary? Explorer? Scientist?

David Livingstone has been attributed each of these titles. Which most embodies the worth of his life? This in-depth biography of David Livingstone's life and adventures will help you understand what the famous Englishman should really be entitled. From the depth and detail of this biography, the reader can safely assume that author Jay Milbrandt has taken great pains to study in depth the life of Mr. Livingstone. The book is well-written: full of details yet not prolix; in depth, but not overwhelming. As you read this book, you will gain an excellent understanding of the life (and death) of David Livingstone. Travel with this great explorer through the wilds of Africa and experience the hardships and strain of that land in that slave trade-torn era. The author reveals the full character of Livingstone, including his faults and weaknesses. But what shines out most of all is this man's undying faith in his Lord, Jesus Christ! Read this book and be touched.

I am passionate about studying history, and I love reading biographies. Therefore, this book was an easy read for me! However, although it isn't necessarily prolix it is so in-depth that some reader may find this a more difficult read. Especially so if you are not familiar with the characters in the book or the places in 19th-century Africa!

Once you finish this book, you will know whether or not this man is best described as: Missionary, Scientist or Explorer!

I received a copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for my honest review

About the Author

Jay Milbrandt is a professor at Bethel University in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is a Senior Fellow in Global Justice with the Nootbaar Institute at Pepperdine University School of Law where he formerly directed the Global Justice Program. He travels throughout the world as a human rights lawyer, manages global initiatives in Africa and Southeast Asia, and consults with organizations engaged in human rights and legal development efforts. JayMilbrandt.com

Jeremy says

I must confess, the only things I knew about David Livingstone prior to this past month was his quest for the source of the Nile River and the famous line, “Dr Livingstone, I presume.” I thought Livingstone was a mere explorer and had no idea that his deep faith shaped him in tremendous ways.

Jay Milbrandt’s “The Daring Heart of David Livingstone” painted a wonderful picture of this complex man who embodied the spheres of science, exploration, and missionary work so well. Livingstone was a driven, complex man who was painfully aware of his own deficiencies. Often times he would not yield to counsel, but instead would press on out of his driven (or perhaps, stubborn) nature. After initial triumphs, he experienced setback after setback, ultimately dying in the land he loved. His drive to expose and abolish the East African slave trade ultimately cost him his life and his family.

One of the major themes that struck me was how Livingstone did not live to see the fruit of his life’s ambition. He instead died nearly penniless and separated from his family. He never saw the abolition of the slave trade in East Africa, never discovered the source of the Nile, and had only one convert to his missionary goals. Like Moses, he never entered into the promised land he so desperately wanted to see.

Milbrandt’s work was well done and thoroughly researched. The book was riveting and full of lively descriptions of the expeditions. Upon closing the biography, I felt like I knew Livingstone better and understood in part the East African slave trade. I also appreciated how Milbrandt brought out the imperialistic vision of Livingstone and let him argue for this movement, allowing history to be its judge. Overall, Milbrandt is an excellent biographer.

If you are into biographies and want to learn about a relatively under-the-radar historical figure, I recommend Jay Milbrandt’s “The Daring Heart of David Livingstone: Exile, African Slavery, and the Publicity Stunt That Saved Millions.” His narrative style and honest portrayal of a flawed yet heroic man is certainly well worth the read.

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